

Gauen (Chloe) Kim

Tell us your art story. You may consider the following: How has art impacted your life? How has your interest in art evolved? How have you grown as an artist?

Early in my Junior year, I faced racial harassment. It was less than a year since I moved from South Korea to the U.S. It was the first time I actually realized that I could be hated by someone only because of who I am. This event tore down the prevailing notions that I held of myself and surroundings. I lost pride in myself. I was ashamed that I am an Asian girl who can't even speak English well enough to defend myself. With fear, emptiness, anger, and worthlessness, I felt as though I was wearing an oversized damp coat all the time. However, this event triggered me to contemplate my honest self, one that is not forced by anyone, and what voice I have as an artist. Discomfort and lack of experience sparked within me both challenge and inspiration. It brought me into new interest in abstract art, free writing, French New Wave films, and philosophy of absurdism by Albert Camus. I was strongly intrigued by the art and films that discuss insecurity, the absurdity of the society that we have created, and the journey to find an authentic self. While I pursue these interests, it has helped me to understand the power of art that brings people together—even if the artwork deals with personal struggles that are extremely private, it creates a safe boundary for anyone to share their stories. I found abstraction to be a perfect way to actively reflect on my experiences. I explored the symbolism and the narrative to tell my story with bold texture and color to express the emotion. The more I confess my honest feelings and experiences through art, the more it turned into a foothold to develop individuality and know what art means to me. Now, art has become a tool to fight against my personal struggles, and avoid mindlessly accepting the status quo. This process has been really painful and exhausting, and it is daunting when I think of the challenges ahead of me. It might leave me with a terrible scar, however, I know that it is not simply a pain but an opportunity to discover a new aspect of myself and be stronger.

What do you believe are your greatest artistic accomplishments?

One of my greatest accomplishment as an artist is a recognition that I got from 2018 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. It was very meaningful especially because I got this recognition while I was so insecure about myself and art after migration from South Korea. I realized that there's someone who cares about my art and my work could affect many. In addition, I exhibited my artwork during the 2018 Portland Open Studios Tour event. While working with local fiber artist, I explored a new medium and way to create artwork. Also, I learned so many skills about exhibiting work in a professional manner. This experience made me start to think about how to effectively organize and present my works. Throughout the Open Studios tour event, I had an opportunity to meet and share a love of art with many local artists. My participation contributed to the local community by bringing diverse voice and I could hear stories from people I never met before.

What are your artistic goals for the future and how would this scholarship help you to achieve them?

My short term goal is attending a four-year college pursuing visual arts. I am still

deciding which specific major I will be in, but my current interest is primarily fine arts. I look forward to learning visual arts more in-depth and study in the bigger community interacting with new people. I'm most excited about taking classes such as film production, printmaking, and computer graphic design because I have not experienced much with these areas of art. After graduating from college, I want to start my career by working at the studio, assisting professional artist while keeping up with my own art projects. I think this job would be a good fit for me because I work better within an interactive workplace. I want to experience a field that requires an active collaboration of people and skills. I believe it would help me run my own studio in the future by learning to communicate and work together with various people. At the end of the college student life, my ultimate goal is to have a solid basis in order to become an independent full-time artist. However, in order to make my artistic goals and ambition come true, I need financial support to afford a college education. This opportunity that Beaverton Arts Foundation provides is crucial for me. My pursuit as a visual artist is not merely self-realization. It is a journey that will inspire and encourage other young women artists and people who fight against racism and social inequalities to pursue their own purpose of life no matter what struggle they might encounter.